

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 3 to 9 and 21 to 27 were pending. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 24. Accordingly, claims 23 (from which claim 24 depended) and claim 24 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer. Allowable claims 25 and 26 have been amended to depend from claim 1. Thus, claims 1, 3 to 9, 21, 22 and 25 to 27 are pending as shown above.

Rejections Withdrawn

Applicants note with appreciation that the rejection of claims 1-9, 22-23 and 27 under U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Karube in light of Sleight has been withdrawn.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1, 3-9, 22-23 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,650,135 to Contag in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,348,867 to Georgiou. (Office Action, pages 3-4).

The limitations of allowable claim 24 have been incorporated into claim 1. Accordingly, the rejections have all been rendered moot and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112 and define an invention that is patentable over the art. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is believed in order and is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner notes any further matters that the Examiner believes may be expedited by a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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